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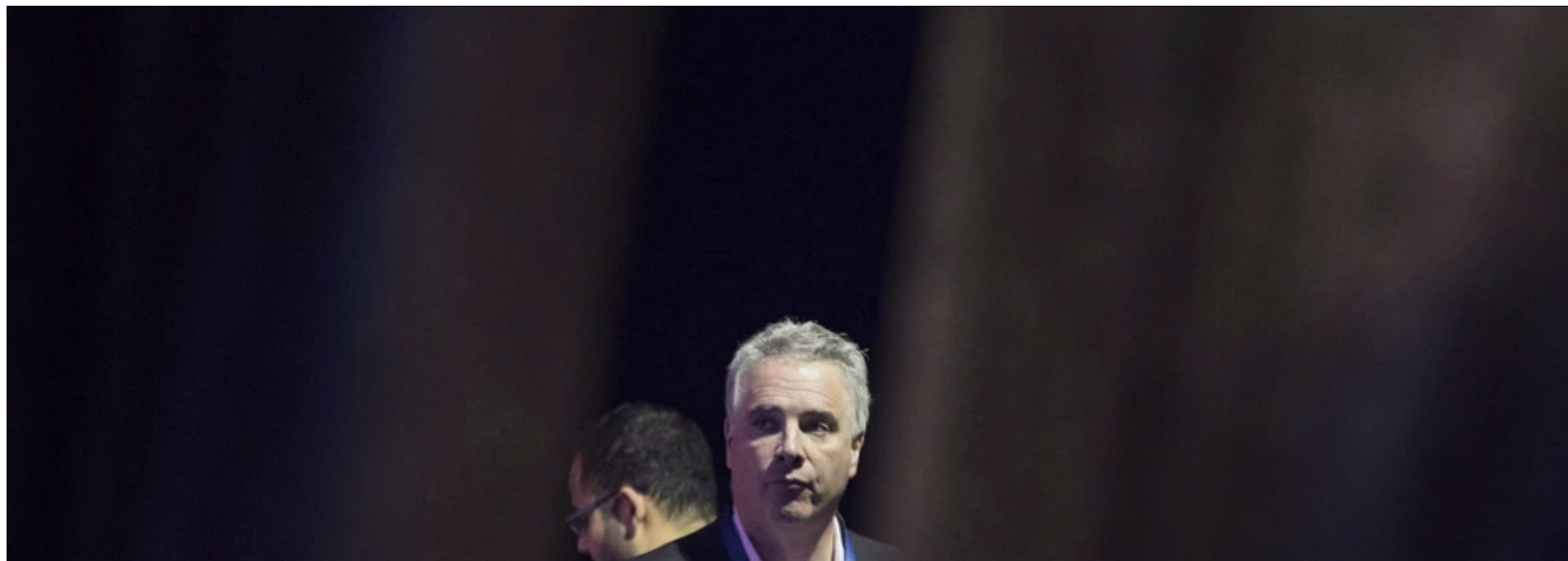


Ontario

Dean French, former chief to Premier Ford, negotiated deal in Ottawa to move trucks

Brian Lilley

Feb 15, 2022 • February 15, 2022 • 1 minute read •  23 Comments





Dean French, former chief of staff for Ontario Premier Doug Ford. PHOTO BY CHRIS YOUNG /THE CANADIAN PRESS FILES

Dean French, the former chief of staff to Ontario Premier Doug Ford, was the secret man behind the negotiations that saw trucks leave residential areas in Ottawa. French confirmed his role in a phone call with the *Sun* late Tuesday.

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French said he was acting as a private citizen and didn't enter into negotiations at the behest of either the Ford government at Queen's Park or the Trudeau government in Ottawa. In fact, French said that he called up Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson to offer his services as a private citizen.

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“I don’t believe in protesting or honking on residential streets,” French said.

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While Watson has taken heat for negotiating with the truck convoy that has disrupted the nation's capital for nearly three weeks, French said the mayor deserves credit. He said talking through differences is the Canadian way and something he has respected Mayor Watson for when working with him in the past.

French said that when he flew to Ottawa from Toronto on Friday, he was skeptical that the talks would be successful. He also said he laid out some ground rules.

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“I wouldn’t negotiate with anyone who called for the overthrow of a duly elected government,” French said.

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The agreement he hammered out saw the organizers of the protest agree that protests, and the trucks that go with them, should be centred around Wellington Street in front of Parliament rather than in residential areas. That has mostly happened now.

“I think that Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Blair should take a page out of Mayor Watson’s playbook,” French said. “Talking is good.”

French said that he received no compensation for his trip or his time in Ottawa and acted only to de-escalate the

situation.



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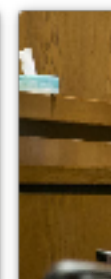
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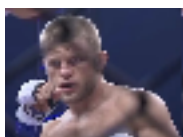
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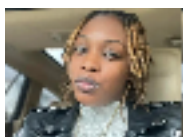
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